

Appln. No.: 09/640,103
Amendment Dated March 29, 2007
Reply to Office Action of November 1, 2006

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Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 1-16 are pending in the above-identified application.

Claims 8 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. This ground for rejection is overcome by the amendments to claims 8 and 15. Basis for these amendments may be found at page 18, lines 15-21.

Claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Buskirk Jr. et al. (hereinafter Buskirk) and Saraki. Applicant respectfully submits that this ground for rejection is improper because neither Buskirk, Saraki nor their combination disclose or suggest:

a plurality of classification rules ... wherein the classification rules are arranged into a plurality of rule sets, said rule sets being associated with one another in accordance with a hierarchical structure

or

the classification module being arranged to cause the at least one text analyzer ... to apply at least one of said rule sets to the message content in accordance with said hierarchical structure wherein the at least one result generated by application of a rule set from said plurality of rule sets to the message content determines at least one other rule set from said plurality of rule sets next to be applied to said message content

as required by claim 1. Claims 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16 include similar recitations.

Buskirk concerns an electronic messaging system that includes a classifier and an action selector. As shown in Fig. 2, Buskirk includes a rules applier as a part of the classifier. The rules applier is coupled to receive classification rules.

In the Office Action, it is asserted that Buskirk discloses "wherein the at least one result generated by the application of the at least one rule set from said plurality of rule sets to the message content determines at least one other rule set from the plurality of rule sets next to be applied to the message content." Applicants respectfully disagree with this assertion. The rules applier of Buskirk is described only at column 3, line 65 through column 4, line 18 and at column 5, lines 21-43. These passages do not indicate that the result of applying any rule set "determines at least one other rule set ... next to be applied." The rules applier is described receiving a vector of features and providing class labels and confidence levels to the action selector module. The processing performed by the rules applier, as described at page 5, lines

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21-43 does not indicate that the application of any rules set determines at least one other rule set next to be applied.

It is admitted in the Office Action, furthermore, that Buskirk does not disclose or suggest, applying the one or more rule sets to the message content in accordance with a hierarchical structure. Accordingly, Buskirk can not disclose or suggest classification rule sets that are associated with one another in accordance with a hierarchical structure.

For the hierarchical application of the rules, the Office Action cites Saraki. Saraki concerns a translation machine for translating hierarchically arranged text. In particular, the Office Action cites Figs. 1A and 1B; the abstract; and col. 6, line 63 to col. 7, line 10. Applicant respectfully submits that none of these passages discloses classification rules that are arranged into a plurality of rule sets, said rule sets being associated with one another in accordance with a hierarchical structure, as required by claim 1, claims 8, 9 and 14-16 include similar recitations.

In Figs. 1A and 1B, Saraki discloses "a parsing tree in a conventional machine translation system." There is no indication in Saraki that this parsing tree is a classification rules set but, even if it were, it is at best a single rules set. There is no indication of multiple hierarchically arranged rule sets as required by claims 1, 8, 9, and 14-16. The parsing tree does not satisfy the description in the claim of a classification rules set because it does not classify an electronic message into at least one message category. Instead, the parsing tree identifies individual parts of speech in a sentence.

The Abstract of Saraki describes a translation machine which extracts relationship information from received text. As described, the machine analyzes sentence structure and semantics and then synthesizes translated sentences. It does not disclose or suggest any classification of received message text so it can not disclose or suggest any classification rule sets or any hierarchically organized classification rule sets.

Saraki, at col. 6, line 63 to col. 7, line 10 describes how the hierarchical text is processed. It is noted that the reference in Saraki is to "hierarchical text" not to a hierarchical rule sets, as required by claims 1, 8, 9 and 14-16. Again, at best, Saraki describes a single rule set which operates on the hierarchical text, not hierarchical rule sets that are used to classify

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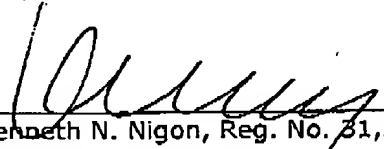
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messages and in which the result of applying one rule set determines at least one other rule set ... next to be applied to said message content.

Because neither Buskirk, Saraki nor their combination disclose or suggest at least these features of claims 1, 8, 9 and 14-16, these claims are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Buskirk and Saraki. Claims 2-7 and 11-13 depend from claim 1 and claim 10 depends from claim 9. Accordingly, these claims are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Buskirk and Saraki for at least the same reasons as claims 1 and 9.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1-16.

Respectfully submitted,


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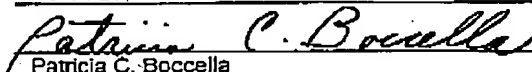
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